

Application No.: 10/506,361
Filing Date: May 16, 2005

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please replace Figures 2 and 3 of Sheet 2 with Figures 2 and 3 of the attached Replacement Sheet. Representative cross-hatching has been added to certain portions of Figure 3. Support for the amendment can be found in Figure 2 as filed. The amendment to the drawings introduces no new matter.

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REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-9 stand rejected. Claims 1, 4, 5, and 8 have been amended. The amendments add no new matter. Thus, Claims 1 and 3-9 are presented for consideration and further examination in view of the following amendments and remarks.

Objections to the Drawings

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. 1.84(u) for having more than one figure with a common reference number. Applicant has provided replacement sheets for the drawings with the upper and lower views of Figure 2 re-labeled as Figures 2 and 3, respectively. Applicant has also amended the specification to reflect this change. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objections to the drawings.

Objections to Claim 5

The Examiner objected to the recitation of “collet chucks are arranged” in Claim 5, indicating that this phrase should instead read “collet chucks is arranged.” Applicant has amended Claim 5 to correct this informality. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objection to Claim 5.

Rejection of Claims 1 and 3-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, paragraph 2

In the Office Action, Claims 1 and 3-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, paragraph 2 as being indefinite for failing particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. First, the Examiner indicates that the preposition “via” as used in Claim 1 renders that claim unclear. Applicant has amended independent Claim 1 to instead recite “a sliding sleeve for locking collet chucks *onto* a connection nipple,” thus clarifying Claim 1.

Next, the Examiner objected to the limitations recited in Claims 1 and 3 referring to “collet chucks,” as the collet chucks are not positively recited elements. Applicant has amended Claim 1 to positively recite “collet chucks.”

In regard to Claim 4, the Examiner objected to the use of the pronoun "its" to modify the "centering incline." The Examiner has also remarked that the recitation of "a front end" in Claim 4 is unclear. Applicant has amended Claim 1 to recite "the coupling having an inlet end and an outlet end," and Claim 4 to recite "a centering incline at the outlet end of the connection coupling," thus clarifying Claim 4.

The Examiner also objected to the recitation of "outwardly spread collet chucks" in Claim 5. Applicant has amended Claim 5 to clarify that the recited collet chucks are indeed the same structural elements as previously recited in Claim 1. Thus, for the reasons stated above, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections of Claims 1 and 3-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 have been overcome.

Rejection of Claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner rejected Claims 1, 3-5, 7, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,077,330 (Lamphear). The Examiner also rejected Claims 1, 3-6, and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,179,300 (Baumann). Applicant respectfully submits that a claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. See M.P.E.P. § 2131.

Lamphear

Claim 1 has been amended to recite "collet chucks; a sliding sleeve for locking the collet chucks onto a connection nipple, the sliding sleeve at least partially surrounding the collet chucks; a guide sleeve with longitudinal grooves in which the collet chucks are guided; [and] a spacer sleeve at least partially surrounding the collet chucks and the guide sleeve, at least a portion of the spacer sleeve being disposed between the sliding sleeve and the collet chucks such that the collet chucks do not directly contact the sliding sleeve."

Lamphear discloses a fluid conduit coupling comprising a socket and an adapter. (Col. 3 ll. 44-55). The socket has an outer actuating sleeve and a latch which holds the outer actuating sleeve in a retracted position. (Col. 5 ll. 59-65). The latch is releasable in response to relative telescoping movement of the socket and the adapter. (Col. 5 ll. 59-65). The inner valve

actuating sleeve 120 of the socket, identified by the Examiner as corresponding to the claimed sliding sleeve, does not lock the fingers 12 of the coupling, as asserted by the Examiner. Instead, the inner sleeve 120 “serves as a means to control the butterfly valve” and “serves as a means to exert thrust against the adapter body.” (Lamphear, col. 7 ll. 40-44). Also, the sleeve 120 does not “at least partially surround[] the collet chucks,” as required by amended Claim 1. The outer sleeve 65, which “overhangs and confines the locking fingers,” is in direct contact with the fingers. (Lamphear, col. 5 ll. 49-53, Figures 2 and 6). Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that Lamphear fails to disclose at least a “a sliding sleeve for locking the collet chucks onto a connection nipple, the sliding sleeve at least partially surrounding the collet chucks; a guide sleeve with longitudinal grooves in which the collet chucks are guided; [and] a spacer sleeve at least partially surrounding the collet chucks and the guide sleeve, at least a portion of the spacer sleeve being disposed between the sliding sleeve and the collet chucks such that the collet chucks do not directly contact the sliding sleeve,” as required by amended Claim 1. Accordingly, because Lamphear does not disclose each and every element of Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that this rejection of independent Claim 1 has been overcome.

Baumann

Independent Claim 1 has been amended to recite, in addition to other limitations, “a sealing piston disposed relative to the collet chucks so as to receive at least a portion of the connection nipple between the sealing piston and the collet chucks, the sealing piston forming at least a portion of the connection coupling lumen.” Applicant respectfully submits that Baumann fails to disclose at least this structure as recited in Claim 1.

Baumann discloses a tool holder for coupling of rotating and striking tools with hand power tools. (Baumann, Abstract). The locking bodies 21 of Baumann clamp directly onto a tool shaft 19. (Baumann, Figure 1). Baumann does not disclose a structure which is “disposed relative to the collet chucks so as to receive at least a portion of [a] connection nipple between the sealing piston and the collet chucks,” or which “form[s] at least a portion of the connection coupling lumen.” Accordingly, because Baumann does not disclose each and every element of Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that this rejection of independent Claim 1 has been overcome.

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Claims 3-9 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1 and, thus, are patentable for at least the same reasons that the claim from which they depend is patentable over the applied art. Therefore, allowance of Claims 1 and 3-9 is respectfully requested.

No Disclaimers or Disavowals

Although the present communication may include alterations to the application or claims, or characterizations of claim scope or referenced art, Applicant is not conceding in this application that previously pending claims are not patentable over the cited references. Rather, any alterations or characterizations are being made to facilitate expeditious prosecution of this application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue at a later date any previously pending or other broader or narrower claims that capture any subject matter supported by the present disclosure, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Accordingly, reviewers of this or any parent, child or related prosecution history shall not reasonably infer that Applicant has made any disclaimers or disavowals of any subject matter supported by the present application.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action are inapplicable to the present claims. Accordingly, early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is most earnestly solicited.

Any remarks in support of patentability of one claim should not be imputed to any other claim in this or a related application, even if similar terminology is used. Any remarks referring to only a portion of a claim should not be understood to base patentability on solely that portion; rather, patentability must rest on each claim taken as a whole.

Applicant respectfully traverses each of the Examiner's rejections and each of the Examiner's assertions regarding what the prior art discloses or teaches, even if not expressly discussed herein. Although changes to the claims have been made, no acquiescence or estoppel is or should be implied thereby; such amendments are made only to expedite prosecution of the present application and are without prejudice to the presentation or assertion, in the future, of claims relating to the same or similar subject matter.

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Any claim amendments which are not specifically discussed in the above remarks are not made for patentability purposes, and it is believed that the claims would satisfy the statutory requirements for patentability without the entry of such amendments. Rather, these amendments have only been made to increase claim readability, to improve grammar, and to reduce the time and effort required of those in the art to clearly understand the scope of the claim language.

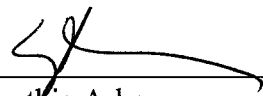
The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to all of the noted rejections and to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped issues remain or if an issue requires clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicant's attorney in order to resolve any such issue promptly.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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